

FROM THE MAGHREB TO MADISON

The Global Mass Strike Comes to Wisconsin

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Feb. 22—The global mass strike, which has swept Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak from office, has now hit the streets of the United States. For the past week, tens of thousands of unionists, students, and other activists have surrounded the State Capitol in Madison, Wis., defying Gov. Scott Walker's (R) plans to rip up public sector workers' collective bargaining rights, as part of his murderous austerity drive. Democratic State Senators have left the state, and are refusing to allow the legislature to reconvene, until Walker drops his efforts to bust the public sector unions. Protests have also erupted in Ohio, Indiana, and New Jersey, where similar efforts are being pushed by Republican governors.

What is unfolding in Wisconsin is no more the result of local events, than are the mass demonstrations in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Bolivia, and Libya. Demonstrators in Madison this week made that point themselves, carrying banners that read "We are all Egyptians" and "Mubarak and Ben Ali are gone, Walker is next."

It's the Global Collapse, Stupid

As Lyndon LaRouche has warned, the entire global financial and economic system is coming down *now*—starting in the transatlantic region. And it is that planet-wide breakdown crisis, which erupted in the Summer of 2007, and has continued at an escalating rate since then, that is behind all of the mass protests.

That breakdown process has now manifested itself

in a serious global food crisis, principally caused by the deliberate policies of what LaRouche defines as "the British (Brutish) Empire," to reduce the world's population to below 2 billion people, from the current level of nearly 7 billion. British Royal Consort Prince Philip famously called for the reduction of the world's population by 80% over several generations, and said he wished to be reincarnated as a deadly virus, to assist in this process. The late Lord Bertrand Russell, in his 1953 *The Impact of Science on Society*, called for the unleashing of a Black Plague once every generation, as a means of curbing population growth.

While the Earth could certainly feed its entire population, and then some, the policies of the British Crown, the City of London, Wall Street, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank and other allied institutions and governments have—over the last 40 years—wiped out much of that production capacity, to the point that the world is no longer coming close to producing adequate food to feed those 7 billion people. Even World Bank President Robert Zoellick admitted last week that 1 billion people are facing starvation on a daily basis.

The physical collapse of food production is compounded by unchecked hedge-fund speculation on commodity futures markets, creating further spikes in prices of basic foods and energy. Such essentials as wheat grains, rice, and corn have skyrocketed in price since October 2010. Cotton prices have reached a 150-year high, adjusted for inflation. In many parts of the world, now shaken by mass protests, 60% of all house-



Creative Commons/pchgorman

Demonstrators at the State Capitol in Madison, Wisc., Feb. 17. Among the signs were: "Walk like an Egyptian" and "Mubarak for Governor."

hold disposable income is spent on food. The spike in food prices, such as has occurred in the past five months, has triggered a mass outcry.

Glass-Steagall Now!

On top of that, the policies of the Obama Administration, and the G.W. Bush Administration before it, have brought about a hyperinflationary collapse of the dollar that has further contributed to the commodity hyperinflation on a scale not seen since 1923 Weimar Germany. And the worst is yet to come, this year, unless LaRouche's call for immediately reinstating the Glass-Steagall standard and wiping out trillions of dollars in purely speculative, illegitimate debt, is acted upon im-

mediately. Unless there is a full Glass-Steagall separation of commercial banks from the purely speculative investment banking, hedge funds, insurance and shadow banks, there is no possibility of a recovery anywhere on this planet. In the Asia-Pacific region, where there is relative actual physical economic expansion, the impact of the transatlantic collapse will overwhelm the situation, and bring down China, India, and every other nation-state of the region.

While demonstrators in Madison were rightly targeting their rage at Governor Walker, the fact is, that it is President Obama who bears more blame than anyone else for this current phase of the global catastrophe. On orders from London and Wall Street, he has personally blocked the reinstating of Glass-Steagall.

As LaRouche first warned in a webcast on April 11, 2009, Obama is a Nero-like narcissist, run from London, who must be removed from office, if the United States is to survive to the end of 2011. The City of London financier oligarchy has declared through diplomatic channels that the U.S. reinstatement of Glass-Steagall would be an "act of war," and they have deployed their mentally challenged tool, President Obama, to kill off all efforts to put Glass-Steagall to an up or down vote in Congress. There is no prospect for averting a horrific New Dark Age, so long as Obama is in the White House and Glass-Steagall is blocked.

Only such a decisive victory in the United States for Glass-Steagall can, at this late date, reverse the process of global disintegration that has already ripped through many parts of the world like a tsunami.

This is the only standpoint from which to understand the recent events in Tunis, Cairo, Tripoli, and Madison.

The Mass-Strike Process

Prior to LaRouche's own writings, from the 1960s through to the present, very few people properly understood the nature of monetarist empires. And even fewer had any understanding of the mass-strike process. The great republican English poet Percy Shelley, the friend of the American Revolution, captured the concept of the mass strike in the concluding sections of his *In Defence of Poetry*:

"We live among such philosophers and poets as sur-

pass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty. The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods, there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving profound and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, the power which is seated upon the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations: for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age.”

The early-20th-Century Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, who studied the works of the great German republican writer Friedrich Schiller, and likened the Russian Revolution to the Rutli Oath from Schiller’s famous *William Tell*, had the best comprehension of both the true nature of the imperial system of monetarist debt, and the dynamics of the mass strike, as distinct from British intelligence asset Karl Marx’s silly notions of class warfare and his hatred of industrial capital.

Showing a grasp for the role of the creative individual in the dynamics of mass psychology and the mass strike, she wrote, in her 1920 history of the Russian Revolution:

“Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of a party, however numerous they may be, is no freedom at all. Freedom is always the freedom of the dissenter. Not because of the fanaticism of ‘justice,’ but rather because all that is instructive, wholesome, and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effects cease to work when ‘freedom’ becomes a privilege....

“Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element.”

Luxemburg’s understanding of the dynamics of the

mass strike were always informed by her deep insight into the continuity of monetarist empire, dating back to the Roman Caesars. In her “Junius Pamphlet,” she identified the choices for mankind in stark terms, in the language of the European social democracy of her day:

“We stand today ... before the awful proposition: either the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all culture, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery; or, the victory of socialism.”

In her extensive writings on the mass strike against the usury of empire, Luxemburg always emphasized that there is no recipe or conspiracy behind the mass strike. It is an historic event, brought on by the crisis in the imperial system.

It is precisely this dynamic that is playing out, today, on a global scale. The fear and paralysis that held people back during decades of economic decay and political repression, have broken, successively, in Tunisia and Egypt. That shift is infectious. But there is no guarantee that what Percy Shelley described as “the accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving profound and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature” shall prevail in the present circumstances.

If the actual republican content of the American Revolution—especially the Hamiltonian credit system, embedded in the U.S. Constitution and in Franklin Roosevelt’s Glass-Steagall Act of 1933—is not adopted soon, the great danger and likelihood is that the mass-strike upsurges will go the way of the British East India Company-engineered French Revolution: a Jacobin terror followed by the fascism and war of a Napoléon Bonaparte.

The global situation hangs on a victory for Glass-Steagall in the United States. Only such an action on the part of leading U.S. circles can break the power of the British imperial monetarist system—even at its moment of greatest vulnerability and disintegration, and set the stage for a profound change globally.

To the extent that the events in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere have sparked a shift in the internal political dynamics in the United States, they will have contributed, profoundly, to saving mankind from a plunge into Hell.

Tunisia and Egypt, for Example

Given that the present global eruptions of mass-strike ferment are tied to the disintegration of the entire bankrupt international financial system, it is useful to examine the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, where the



The Tunisian uprising, Jan. 23. The Tunisian events triggered a mass-strike process from Egypt to Bahrain, from Wisconsin to Bolivia.

social explosions first erupted.

In both cases, the economies were looted, through the identical methods of the British Empire. The situations reached a boiling point, as a growing mass of unemployed young people, many well educated, came to the conclusion that they had no future under the current system.

In the case of Tunisia, under the British imperial system of slave labor and globalization, free-trade zones were established, where foreign companies set up sweat shops for textile manufacturing and similar industries. The foreign firms were granted tax exemptions, and were allowed to repatriate all of their profits. Tunisia was left with nothing.

In the case of Egypt, in the early 1980s, the Mubarak government had an ambitious development plan, involving nuclear power, advanced water management, and the building of new agro-industrial cities to recapture the desert and fully realize Egypt's potential as an agricultural breadbasket, and the manufacturing hub of the Arab world. These policies were crushed through direct British intervention, and the efforts of such British agents as Henry Kissinger. Plans to bring four large nuclear power plants on line by 2010 were scrapped by

1986; the ministers and scientists and engineers who were behind these ambitious plans were driven from the government.

The alternative model—the British free-trade model—was imposed, once again, on Egypt, just as British and French bankers has raped Egypt in the late 19th Century, a case study presented by Rosa Luxemburg in her seminal work on imperial debt looting, *The Accumulation of Capital*.

Instead of producing wheat for the Egyptian people, the nation's agricultural potential was directed at export markets. Egypt is now the world's largest importer of wheat, and the largest exporter of strawberries to the European Union. After cancelling the planned nuclear power plant construction, Egypt struck a deal with British Petroleum, to turn over the nation's oil and gas reserves to London. On paper, Egypt was growing at an impressive 7% rate of increase of GDP per year. In the real world, the wealth gap has been increasing for the past decade. Under a 1996 deal brokered by then-Vice President Al Gore, Egypt was arm-twisted into selling off its state-sector industries, starting with the steel industry, the largest, by far, in the Arab world. London-linked oligarchs, some with Egyptian birth certificates, stole the national patrimony at pennies on the dollar. The ill-gotten gains found their way into bank accounts in the City of London.

As LaRouche observed, President Mubarak, contemplating his legacy, in weakened health, turned to his family, rather than his nation. His son Gamal, one of the principal figures in the British rape of Egypt, became the number one target of public hatred, as President Mubarak, under the increasing sway of his family, sought to pave the way for Gamal to succeed him into the Presidency.

In both Tunisia and Egypt, all of the preconditions were over-ripe for precisely the kind of mass-strike revolt that has now occurred. But the same can be said for every nation, including the United States, and almost every nation in Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, and South and Central America.

The British Empire is dead, and the stench of death is everywhere, driving the worldwide social explosions. The question for mankind, in the immediate days and weeks ahead is: Will the United States act on behalf of humanity, restore Glass-Steagall, remove Obama from office, and launch the kind of physical economic recovery, represented by the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) and its global offshoots? Therein lies humanity's last best hope.